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Dr. *A W B R E Y*'s

S E R M O N

Before the **HONOURABLE**

House of Commons,

On the 29th of *May*, 1715.

Lunæ 30. Die Maii 1715.

Ordered,

THAT the Thanks of this House be given to the Reverend Dr. Awbrey for the Sermon by him Preached before this House Yesterday at St. Margaret's Westminster, and that he be desired to print the same; and that Mr. Cholmly and Sir Richard Steele do acquaint him therewith.

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

Hon^{ble} House of Commons

On the 29th of *May*, 1715.

BEING THE
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
RESTORATION
OF
King *CHARLES II.*

By TIMOTHY AWBREY, D. D.

L O N D O N:

Printed for WILLIAM TAYLOR at the *Ship* in
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A

SERMON

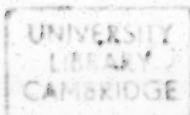
THE

OF THE

MINISTER

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RESTORATION



KING CHURCH



ISAIAH Chap. 28th. the last or
29th Verse.

*This also cometh forth from
the Lord of Hosts, which is
wonderful in Council, and ex-
cellent in working.*



THE Prophet having in the beginning
of this Chapter charged some parti-
cular Sins against *Ephraim*, by whom
he understands the Ten Tribes ex-
clusive of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, does
in the first place magnify and set forth the great
Power of God, in being able to punish for Sin,
by comparing him to a *destroying Storm*, or a
Flood of mighty Waters; in the second place he
charges them with Sin it self, by telling them
that both the *Priest* and the *Prophet* have erred
through

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through strong drink, and have stumbled in judgment; in the last place he puts them in mind of God's wonderful Providence over the Israelites, but particularly in his forbearance and long-suffering towards the Ten Tribes, in that he has not as yet trodden under foot the Crown of Pride, nor hastily cut off the glorious but fading Beauty of Ephraim. The delay of God's Justice at this time gave occasion to some of them to imagine and conclude, that because Wickedness was not immediately brought to Judgment, therefore there was neither God nor Providence in this World, neither Rewards nor Punishments in the next; and consequently every one was at his liberty and might act as he pleased. As nothing is falser than this conclusion, so neither is any thing more dangerous; it is the common Rock that Mankind splits on; it is always in our view, and therefore to be avoided; yet the Weakness and Infirmities of our Flesh always drives us on it. The Principles of these false Arguments the Prophet does very elegantly refute in the latter end of this Chapter by the Similitude of the Husbandman, which tho' deduced from Nature, does yet incomparably illustrate the Providence of God in the moral part of our Life, or rather enforces the proof of the Existence of a superior Power, that governs and over-rules us here; because it cannot be supposed that an all-wise Being should be less carefull in providing for our moral than our natural Exigencies. Wherefore after the Prophet had shewed

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shewed them what upon Examination they could not question, that it is *God* that ordereth and appointeth the Sun, Moon and Stars to govern the Year, and that by their revolutions and relations to each other, the Countryman knoweth when to plant, when to sow, when to reap the Fruits of the Earth with increase, he at last concludes with this pathetick Reflection and Confession of the Power and Providence of God, saying, *This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in Councell and excellent in working.*

The Councils of *God* are impenetrable, and are rather *August* Objects of our Admiration, than matters of human Enquiry; and it would be the highest Arrogance in a work of Clay to presume at the knowldge of the Almighty *Mind*, any farther than *Revelation* has discovered it to us: and tho' by our natural Lights we cannot reach the depth of his Wisdom, or the immensity of his Power and Will; yet by our natural Lights we are able to discern his providential Hand over this or that People; by our natural Lights we are able to pronounce that *God* has favoured this People more than he has done another: This Province the Prophet seems to have undertaken in this Chapter, in order to draw from the ungrateful *Jews* those Returns, which Justice, and Gratitude, and Fear obliged them to have paid. And since no time is ill employed for such a purpose,

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1. I shall *First* lay before you what Reasons the Prophet might have to break forth into this pious and just Exclamation.

2. *Secondly*, I shall shew what Reasons *we* have, and what Obligations *we* are under to make the same acknowledgments to God and more particularly for the wonderful Work performed as on this *Day*.

The Arguments made use of by the Prophet to infer a Providence, and to excite the *Jews* to make proper and humble Acknowledgments to the *Fountain* of all Goodness, were either the Consideration of the Impotence or Weakness of *Man*, or a Conviction from miraculous Actions and Deliverances, that Providence did actually take care of and govern the World, particularly the *Jewish* Nation.

And because *Man* is that presumptuous thing that disputes the Power and Government of his Maker over him, I shall consider him in his natural State, in the Powers of his Body and the Powers of his Mind; and that will be divesting him of *all* those shining Prerogatives, he sometimes thinks himself Master of; and he will find himself but an indifferent Piece, when as to the Absoluteness of his Power, he sees himself placed upon the Level with the most despicable and motionless Being. This, in the Opinion of some Men, might seem a Hardship and Grievance, but

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but the strong Imaginations and Pride of some Men, will never be an Argument against the Truth of their Dependency or the Reality of their Insufficiency. To examine then into the Powers or Strength of the Body of Man, is only to tell you, he is very much limited as to the extent of his own force. For if he pretends to exert his Powers beyond such a Degree, that is, beyond their natural force, he is immediately check'd by some prohibiting Pains, which closely follow his weak and presumptuous Endeavours. And if we enquire whether we may call that force his own which he dayly uses, and search from whence it is derived, we shall observe, he holds it on a very precarious Title: Since he is not certain that he shall be able to perform what he purposes or intends to do to morrow or next Day; nay he is not assured that the next minute shall be his own; his Strength, his Beauty, his Riches, his Honour may all be taken from him in an Instant; he may in a moment be reduced to his Primitive Nothing. He is Master of nothing but Corruption, Weakness, Insufficiency and Imperfections. He is a Being so very dependent on the Author of his Nature, so very dependent that he cannot even subsist without his Influence. He cannot add one moment to the time of his Life or Continuance in this World, unless Providence wills it should be so; so that the Preservation of every Creature (for which we give God Almighty Thanks in our Liturgy) in respect of Providence, is but a continued Creation; because the same Will that first created the World and Man, is the

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same that now subsists and operates without Interruption. So that the Powers whereby we our selves act, have no other Cause than his Power and Will. And if this delegated Power is a Trust given us, which we ought to manage to such Advantage, as may best redound to his Honour and Glory, we shall hardly answer the employing these Powers on criminal Occasions. It being certain, they never were bestowed for such Purposes. We are Vessels consecrated and specially appropriated to the Service of our Maker; and if what we term *Sacrilege* may properly be so called in respect of Things set aside for his Service and put to Profane Uses, it will with much greater Reason be charged against Us, who are of his Divine Extraction and particular Appointment.

My next Enquiry is to make some Discoveries of him in relation to the Powers of his Mind. And if his own Conscience will be allowed to be a Witness against him in any Case, we have a very full and convincing Evidence of his Impotence and Weakness in this respect likewise. When every Man's Conscience tells him, that *Man* came not into this World by Vertue of any Power inherent in himself; that he has not the Command of any one Faculty of his Soul; 1. For as to his *Memory* the first Faculty, he remembers what he cannot help, and what he would call to mind that he cannot recollect; even those things which we have learnt and those things which we have seen, tho' useful to us in the common Course

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Course of our Lives, we loose both the Sight and Knowledge of; our whole Life is but a Dream, and the Reality of it, is but the Enjoyment of the present moment, and the Satisfaction we have of having done well. 2. Then as to the *Will* the second Faculty of the Soul, this is that which *Man* principally seems to boast of and yet he cannot controul. He often *wills* what is both repugnant to his Reason and Interest, and what may be hurtfull to him in the end; he is a *Slave* to that which ruins and destroys him; and tho' he sees himself bound with these Golden Chains of *Freewill* and *Liberty*, he is Child enough to be pleased with his Fetters and Slavery. 3. Then as to the Understanding which is the third Power of the Mind, we know nothing here as we ought to know; we know not the wonderfull working of these very Bodies we inhabit; we know not the least Motion in our Bodies, neither what causes it, nor how it is performed. The Form, the Bulk, the Situation, the use of every little Organ, and every subtle Passage within us, are all strange to us, and when we begin to look without Prejudice into our selves, we are forced to declare with the *Psalmist* that we are *fearfully* and *wonderfully* made. We see through a Glass darkly, *Clouds and Darknes* are round about us, and thick *Mists* cover us. Our Knowledge is limited, finite and imperfect, and tho' we cannot exceed certain Bounds the *Almighty* Lawgiver has prescribed to us, yet this is no more than what he said to the *mighty* Waves of the Sea, when he laid his Hands upon the *Flouds*, *hitherto*

shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud Waves be stayed. From what has been urged it will be observed, that we have nothing but the Imperfections of our Body and Mind to boast of, for as to the Perfections of both or either of them they are neither in our Command nor Power. This, is the proper Glass, wherein *Man* ought to survey and admire himself. This, is that will give him that true Spirit of Meekness and Acknowledgement, required of him, so necessary a Preparative for his Exaltation in another World. If then we would think of our selves as we ought to think, we must consider our selves these weak and impotent Creatures the most necessitous and most compassionate Objects of Divine Mercy and Government; unable even to perform the necessary Offices and Duties of Life, without the Permission and Assistance of that *Divine* Person that first created us, and does think it fit in his Wisdom and Goodness still to preserve us; we must consider, I say, that we breathe, that we are fed, that we are cloathed through his Bounty and Goodness only.

Arguments, taken from the Weakness and Imbecillity of human Nature in general, were proper *Mediams* to convince not only the *Jews*, but every vain presumptuous Man of his Debt and Obligation to *Providence*; and if to this Evidence, we add that other Conviction from miraculous Actions and Deliverances, this Confession will be extorted from us, that *Providence* did actually take care of, and govern the

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the World, particularly the Jewish Nation.

That the World in general has been under the Conduct and Protection of Providence ever since Noah's Flood, or rather the Creation of the World, will never be argued or controverted at this time of Day, since the very Continuation of its Form, and of the Laws of Succession and Propagation in it, must destroy any Arguments that can be offered or brought to the contrary. That the several Kingdoms of the Earth have in their times been governed by an Over-ruling Power, tho' not so immediately as the Jews were, is likewise beyond Dispute, since the very Permission of those Kingdoms proceeds from the Will of our great Creator; but to what Ends and Purposes they were permitted, or to what Ends and Purposes they were destroyed, is known only to that wise Being, that disposeth and ordereth all things for his own Honour and Glory. Yet thus far we may gather from sacred Writings, the infallible Records of the Insensibility and Obstinacy of the Jews, that the Kingdoms of the Earth were frequently appointed and ordained by God to be Scourges and Punishments for the Sins of that rebellious murmuring Nation. Nebuchadnezzar the most absolute and most tyrannical Monarch of the Chaldeans is commissioned by God Almighty and is called by the Prophet Jeremiah the Servant of God, to destroy the Jews, to make them an Astonishment, and a Hissing and a perpetual desolation. Jer. 25. 9. The Prophet Habbakuk representing the Vengeance that God was to execute on the

the Jews by the violence of the same Chaldeans; says, O Lord, thou hast ordained them for Judgment, and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for Correction, Habbak. i. 12. Yet this terrible and dreadful Monarch, for the barbarities used by him both towards his own Subjects and towards Strangers, proved the most eminent Instance of God's temporal Displeasure and coercive Power, that History has transmitted down to us. His Transformation shewed, that never Prince was humbled like this Monarch. The Golden Image erected in Honour to him by the flattery of his Court and refused to be worshipped by the Jewish Captives ought to be an instructive Lesson to modern Princes, not to look upon these base Homages and profane Sense as Arguments of their Immortality. The Jews often groaned under the severest Afflictions, and often bowed down their Neck to Sorrow and Anguish, but because they imagined these evils to have been the effects of natural Causes, like modern Atheists, they were willing to lull themselves into a Belief, that Providence was not necessary to be introduced in those matters, where Nature was sufficient to operate. As the Jews were illustrious Examples of God's Indignation, so were they singular Instances of his Favour, and the undeserving Subjects of his particular Protection; and in what manner soever they might have imputed their Punishments to the effects of Nature, tho' we cannot but admire the Wisdom, the wonderfull working and the Majestick Footsteps of God's Providence in the Combination
and

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and use of those natural means, yet it is evident that their glorious and manifold Deliverances can never be judged as the effects of natural Causes, nor reducible to the known Laws of Matter and Motion. The mighty Armies that were discomfited without the least Action on the side of the Jews or the appearance of any Success; the strong Towns that were besieged, whose Walls were levelled by the bare noise of Trumpets; the wonderful Conveyance of a murmuring Nation through a deep Sea, whose Waves that naturally ought to have hurried on their Destruction, were Walls and Guards on each side of them; the opening of hard Rocks for their sustenance, and the drying up mighty Rivers for the convenience of their March; above all, their Heavenly Food in a desolate Wilderness, continued to them by the immediate Finger of God for the Space of forty Years, subject to Corruption every Day in the Week, except the Sabbath; all these, I say, with their deliverance from being poisoned by gazing on a Brazen Serpent, are such signal Instances of God's saving hand over that People, that the Prophet had more than ordinary reason to be convinced that Providence did actually take care of and govern the World, particularly the Jewish Nation.

These were just Motives to inspire the Prophet's Soul with the deepest Acknowledgments to the Almighty Deliv'erer; and to instill the same into the Minds of the Inhabitants of Jerusalem with the utmost Zeal and Vehemence he was capable

capable of Part of these Motives, I mean those drawn from the Imperfections and Insufficiency of Human Nature, affect us, equally with the rest of Mankind; the special Obligations we are under, which was what I proposed in the second place to consider, cannot be better represented to us than in the glorious Blessing and Deliverance vouchsafed to us as on this Day; *when* an end was put to the most violent and most tyrannical Usurpation that a *free-born* People ever groaned under; *when* the Rage of Monsters and of brutish Men, instead of being chastised, was to be buried in Oblivion: *When* the Cries of Widows and Orphans were turned into the Voice of Joy and Melody; *when* Hypocrisie became no longer insolent, and Cruelty no longer an Establish'd Government; *when* Honour was returned to its Fountain, and Justice to its Channel; *when* Confusion and Despair were expelled our Habitations, and Loyalty and Order admitted in their room. This is the proper Description of the Day, wherein *Monarchy* and *Regal Government*, attended by *Property* and ancient *Liberty*, were restored to these Nations. But what *Loyalist*, what *Statesman* could assure us of this Blessing before we felt it? To what *Arm* of *Flesh* could the Nation ascribe the healing of their bleeding Wounds, and the return of their Obedience to a forgiving *Sovereign*? By whose working was the malicious Perverseness of a rebellious People turned to Resignation and Meekness? To whose Counsel was it owing, that an *Exiled King*,

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King, abandoned by his Subjects and Friends, rejected by every State and Power in *Europe*, and in a manner deserted by his own Council, was, within a moment after, told by the Mouth of the Commons of *England*, that "If the Riches
" of the Nation could make him *Great*, if the
" Affections of his People could make him
" *Happy*, he was the *Greatest Monarch* in the
" World? This wonderful change in the Hearts of Men whose Prejudices were settled, was not the effect of human Contrivance, but of the Bounty and Goodness of *Providence*, which calls for our loudest Acknowledgments; it being still more visible in this respect, that the Insecurity People apprehended themselves under, through the great Violation of our Laws, seemed, humanly speaking, the greatest Obstruction to the *Blessing* they might otherwise hope for. But nothing is impossible to him who can of Stones raise up Children to himself, and make the strongest human Prejudices execute his Designs. One cannot well represent the true and real value of this Blessing to our Constitution both in Church and State, without exposing to your View some of the most frightful and dismal Scenes of the late *Rebellious Reign*; but as this Work is more proper for a Day of Humiliation than of Thanksgiving, I shall draw a Curtain over this melancholy part, and only beg leave to mention one other *Blessing*, equal indeed with the former, but then unknown to us, which the Almighty, Wonderful Counsellor
C thought

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thought fit to give us at the same time with the *Restoration*; and that is, the ever memorable *Gift* of his Majesty now reigning; who, by the eternal Goodness and Preparation of Providence was ordained and given to these Nations the Day before our Restored *Sovereign* made his Entrance into his Capital City; and on whom the same adorable Providence had propitiously settled the Crown of these Realms by the most virtuous, heroick *Prince*, the *Glorious* Instrument of our late happy Revolution. It is true, when Dangers threaten, or when Distress is ready to lay hold on us, we immediately fly to the *Throne of Grace* for Protection and Deliverance; but then like the nine Lepers in the Gospel, the moment we are cleansed we become mute and dumb in our Acknowledgments. If our Thanksgiving ought to bear Proportion with the Evils we are delivered from, it will be incumbent upon us not only as long as we live, but as long as we are a *Free* Protestant Nation, to glorifie the *Giver* of all these Mercies; and surely it must be the last degree of Stupidity not to discern the Influence of Heaven in all these amazing Events. And yet there are some among us, who like the *Jews* with the *Heavenly Food* in their Mouths, murmur and repine at the Blessings they are in possession of; who arraign the *Revolution* as if the whole View of it had been to countenance Sectaries, and to shake the Foundation of our Establish'd Church: and even
now

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now the same Seeds of Discord are sown, and Reasons insinuated to prove that the Sectaries all over this Realm are nothing else but the Spawn and Production of Jesuits and Popish Contrivances, and that therefore they ought to be equally odious to the Church of England, and that the Rigour and Penalties of our Laws ought to be equally severe against one as against the other. I must own it might be no difficult matter to grant these transported and enraged Patriots their *Postulatum*, if they would be contented with that; but since our Fears from both are not equal, the Inference they would draw from this Concession will admit of some Qualification. It being too apparent that the Court of Rome lost her Aim by the Separations she formed here: Every day's Experience assuring us, that the *Unfortunate* and *Misled* Dissenters are infinitely less prejudiced against the *Discipline* and *Worship* in our Church, than against the *Idolatrous* Forms and *Tyrannical* Discipline of the Church of Rome; and are therefore to be esteemed not the worst Barrier we have against Popery and its favourite Issue Ecclesiastical Tyranny. This Effect was unforeseen by Popish Counsels, and being so contrary to their Expectation, it is no wonder they look upon it with the most bitter and hateful Concern. And this is another Instance of the Excellent Wisdom and Counsel of Providence, in turning the restless Designs and artful Projects of that corrupted Church against her self.

It will be the less surprizing that there are Murmurers against the *Revolution*, and the *Glory* of it the *present Establishment*, when at the same time no Scruple is made to throw all the Dirt imaginable upon the *Reformation* it self; vilifying the Rise and Progress of it in foreign Parts, assigning it to base and popular Causes; and ridiculing that of these Nations, as proceeding not indeed from a *Plebeian* but a *Brutish* Original. Whatever *Communion* these licentious Spirits are of in reality, it has the Face, I must own, of a very *corrupt* one; and one cannot well look upon a Man that expresses himself after this manner, but that he seeks occasion to make a Defection from the *Establish'd Church* and return to *Idolatry*, as soon as Opportunity shall offer it self. But God be thanked, the *Reformed Religion* in this *Island* begun there where the *Supremacy* did of *undoubted, antient* Right belong; begun in a Prince, descended from a Race that had maintained the Liberty of their Church against Papal Incroachments, near Five hundred Years after *Austin* had attempted by a *Legatine Power* to bring them into Subjection to the *See of Rome*; descended, I say, from *Britons*, who were the last of all the Churches of *Europe* that gave up the *Supremacy*; and this Prince, in Honour and Justice to his Race, was the first that recover'd it. To *Him* it is owing, that the *Supremacy*, one of the most shining *Prerogatives*, is returned to the Crown. To *Him*, under *God*, it is owing, that
that

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that the purest Form of Worship over the Christian World is *secured* to the People of this Nation. And since the *Protestant* Religion is established by Law, to me nothing seems more absurd, or indeed more criminal, than that Men should pretend to derive Doctrines from the *Oracles* of our Religion against the *Security* and *Protection* of it. This is making God *Almighty* declare against the Preservation of what he enjoins us. Our Ancestors thought it no Offence against God, nor any Derogation from their Faith or Duty as Christians, to stipulate the Security of their Religion with their Princes; and I see little reason why reformed Christians should not be as zealous for the *Purity* of their Religion, as our Ancestors were for their *Corruptions*. Men may make a Surrender of their Civil Rights and Privileges if they think fit, that being in their Power to depart from, during their own Lives, but what Men are obliged in Conscience, according to the Precepts and Humility of the Gospel, to propagate; That, I think, they can by no colour of Reason or passage of Scripture, justify a Surrender of. *Providence* in the Infancy of our Religion, when humane Means were wanting and insufficient to support it, defended it with his own Arm, and made ignorant and contemptible Persons the chief Instruments of its Propagation; but since his *Wisdom* has thought fit to give it *National* Sanctions and Establishments, his first Measures are altered, and his immediate Inspirations are withdrawn;
and

and he has now left it to Christian Governments and to Humane Means to make an Entail of it on our Posterities; so that the Care of the Propagation of the *Purity* of his Worship will be required at the Hands of every *Christian Legislature*. If the Purity of our Establish'd Religion has the Foundation it is known to have in the *inspired Writings*, we shall ill comply with the Measures *Providence* is at present pleased to make use of, if we prevent its going down to Posterity; which those Men effectually do, who, tho' willing to die in the Maintenance of the *Faith*, complement away the *Right* their Children have to it, to the *absolute* Power of Princes. This is giving, as Saint Paul says, *ones Body to be burned*, and yet wanting *Charity*. It is too well known to what Precipices and how near our Ruin, the gross and servile flattery of some ambitious Spirits had carried us; when Arguments were put into our *Princes* Mouths to justify the most illegal Acts and the highest Oppression; when People were taught to look upon *Tyranny* and *Slavery* as Ordinances of God, and an Active vigorous *Obedience* to *Legal* Authority, the best and firmest Support of the British Monarchy, made a jest of and the sport of designing Men. But the difference of times has raised different Sentiments in the Breasts of Men; and the Man that could press the Conscience with *unlimited* *Subjection* Yesterday, can conscientiously to Day mutter Rebellion in every Corner of our Streets. What less Inconsistence can be expected from a Cause, animated by

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by Flattery, and supported by Principles that have neither Precedent nor Reason for their Foundation, and which their own Will and Reason cannot submit to? Nature has been often invoked to qualify the Severity of these Principles, and as Humours have not been gratified, the purest and most regular Establishment in the whole Christian World has been threatned to be invaded by Nature, and Principles given up and abandoned to the basest Views and most destructive Purposes. This looks as if such Men were not born and educated to maintain their Principles, but their Principles invented to maintain them. This is truly giving up the Cause of Conscience, turning *Religion* into *Hypocrisie*, and *Faith* into *Faction*, and following the Pattern of the most calamitous of times with less *Sense*, less *Remorse* and less *Provocation*. I am sure our National Religion is as capable of Franchises and Immunities as the Religion of any other Nation upon Earth; but to make the Privileges and Immunities it has already acquired, depend upon the *Will* of one Man, is betraying not only the *Revenues* of our Church, but in a manner disowning its *Purity*. And I can easily persuade myself, that the Absurdity and Uncharitableness of these Compliments will never be looked upon as Jewels proper to adorn the *British* Crown, or to embellish the Character of one of the most Religious and most discerning Princes of Europe. The Circumstances of whole critical Birth, Arrival, and Establishment here, cannot but be looked upon

on as-so many happy Presages and gracious Promises from Heaven of the *Prosperity, Plenty, Freedom and Tranquillity* this Nation will enjoy under his *auspicious* Reign; for which comfortable and necessary Blessing, which is come upon us like a *fruitful Rain upon a thirsty and dry Ground*, to him, who is able to make us all of one Mind, and truly thankful for the personal as well as national Benefits bestowed on us, to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost be all Honour, Glory, Power, Praise, Might, Majesty and Dominion now and for ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



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